

Maritime Cooperation in the Western Mediterranean



The WestMED Initiative

6 years on....

Boosting the sustainable blue economy

Since its inception in 2017, the initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean (WestMED in short), has been building bridges between Southern Europe and Northern Africa to strengthen relations between the region's countries. It works in close cooperation with the Union for the Mediterranean.

With 10 Western Mediterranean countries, based on the 5+5 dialogue, the initiative supports project development by providing technical advice related to funding opportunities and connecting potential project partners across the sea basin. These countries include Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Portugal and Tunisia.

Each of the countries has a National Hub/ - Centre with blue economy experts. In 2023 the WestMED Centre Libya was activated, supported by WestMED's National Hub Italy.

In the last 6 years, 115 blue project ideas have been actively supported by the WestMED Assistance Mechanism and submitted under different funding calls. 45 of these have been approved for funding, resulting in a total of €78.1M invested in the region to strengthen the sustainable blue economy with innovative initiatives. Simultaneously, cooperation within and between the countries have been strengthened by actively promoting the sustainable blue economy across the board - from science to governance.

Bound by good governance principles, the partner countries have continued to explore opportunities to support sustainable blue growth, jobs and innovation.

In 2023 all countries recomitted themselves to the goals of the WestMED Initiative, while at the same time streamlining its priorities with a Ministerial Declaration signed in Malta, organised back-to-back with the WestMED Stakeholder Conference.

At the same time, the WestMED Initiative provided a platform for stakeholder dialogue on key themes such as sustainable transport (green shipping and ports), aquaculture (AquaWest) and maritime cluster development.

The Initiative also provided active support to the MSP-MED Community of Practice that was launched in 2023 to improve cross-border dialogue amongst Maritime Spatial Planning practitioners.

Given the fact that other sea basins face common challenges, WestMED's Assistance Mechanism has joined forces with the Assistance Mechanisms from the Black Sea and the Atlantic as part of the EU Sea Basin Strategies. This has led to more joint events, knowledge exchange and policy recommendations together with the Atlantic Action Plan and the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea.

For the future, the initiative promises to continue boosting close cooperation to strengthen a sustainable blue economy that benefits the symbiosis of people and nature today and for future generations.

10 National Hubs/ - centres



Objectives

3 Goals



A safer and more secure maritime space



A smart and resilient blue economy



Improved maritime governance

6 Priorities



Maritime safety and the fight against marine pollution



Maritime Cluster development



Skills Development and Circulation



Sustainable Consumption and Production



Biodiversity and Marine Habitat conservation and restoration



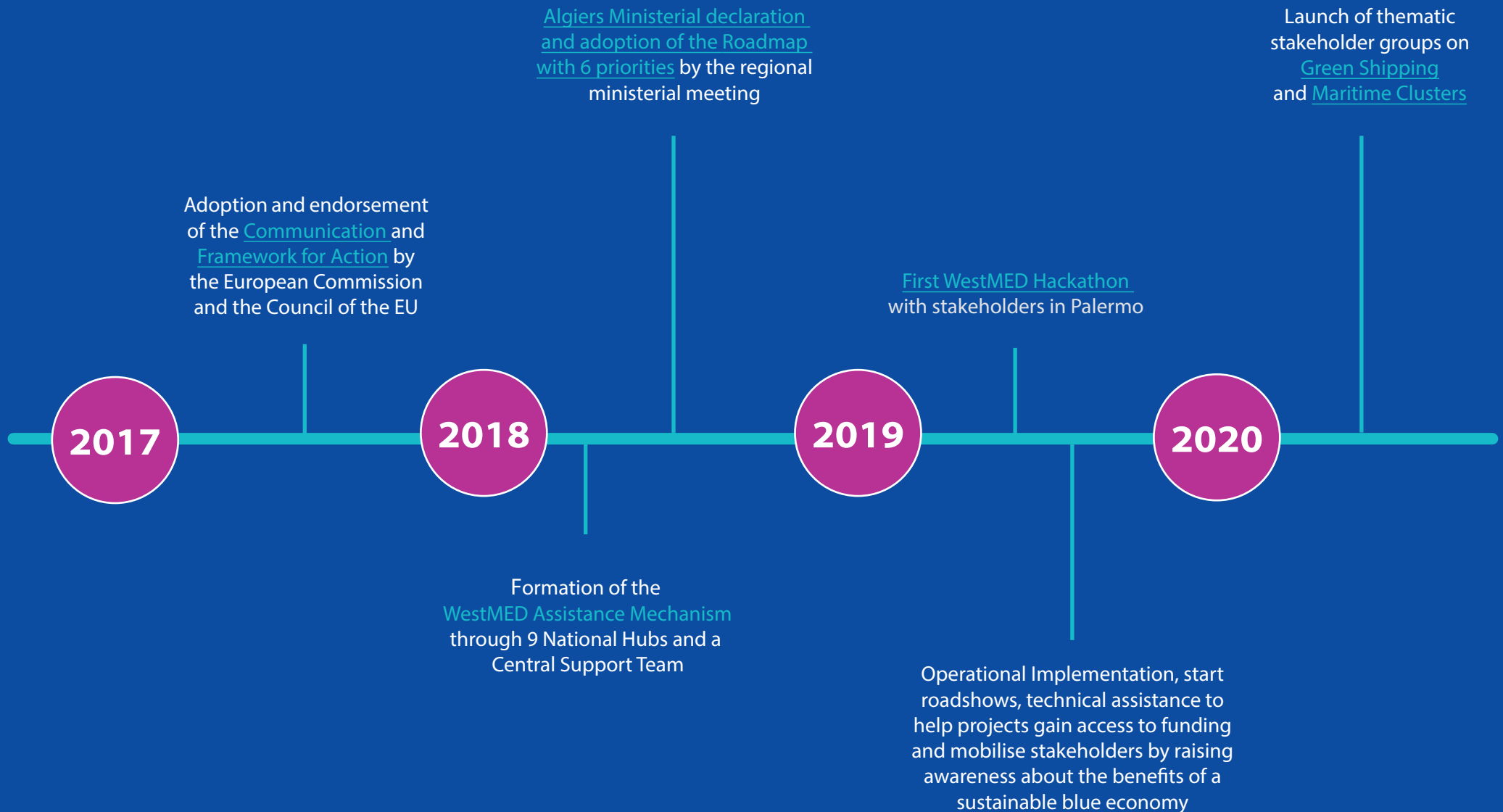
Development of Coastal Communities, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture



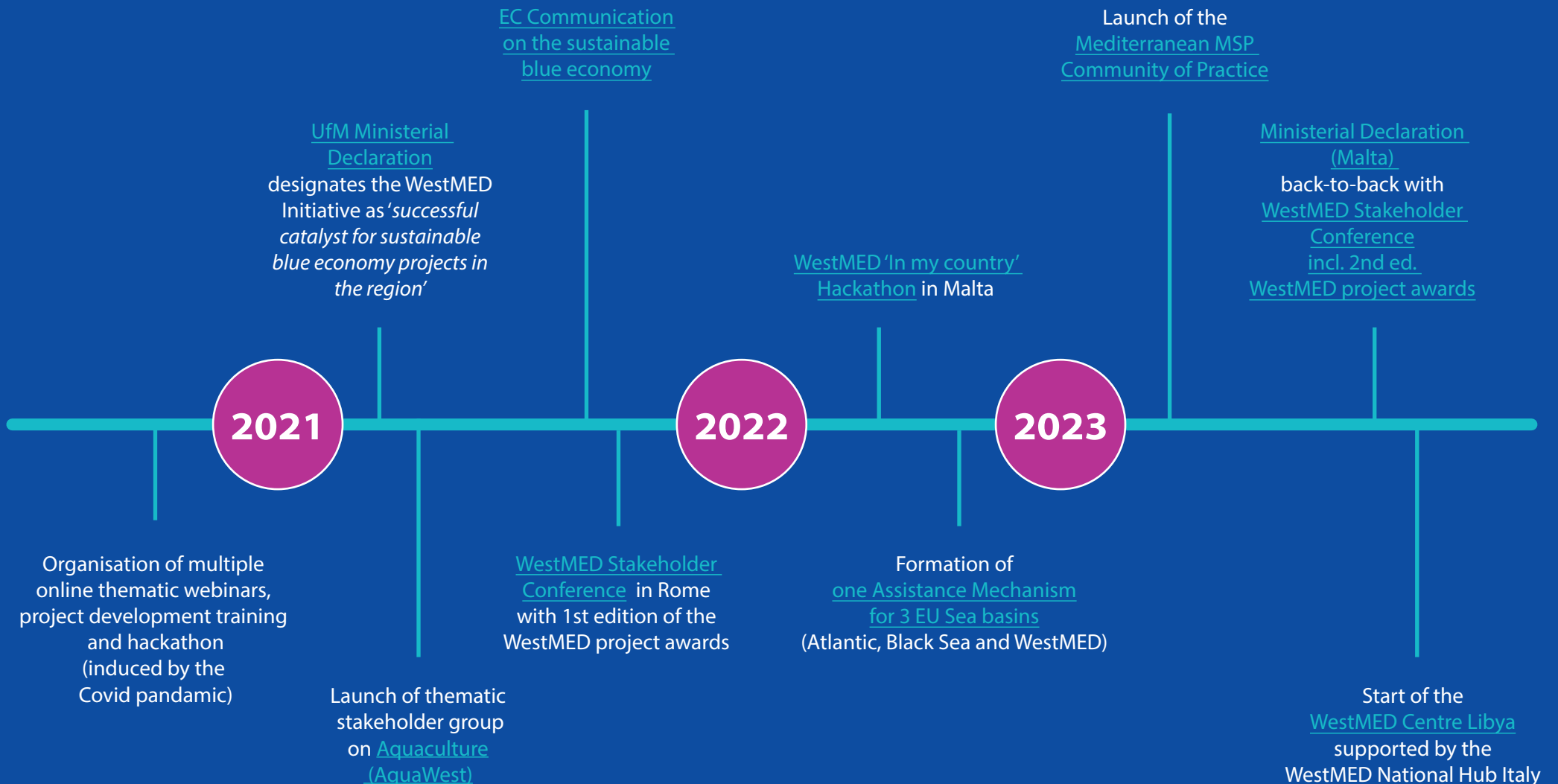
Priorities Streamlined with the 2023 WestMED Ministerial Declaration, adding

- Decarbonisation of the Blue Economy, and importantly boosting the Marine Renewable Energy Sectors
- Stepping up efforts to tackle air and marine pollution
- Increasing ambition for preserving marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean
- Promote training and technology transfer
- Developing coastal resilience solutions and early warning systems
- Maritime security and surveillance as a pre-condition for a prosperous and sustainable blue economy in the Mediterranean

Timeline



Timeline



WestMED Projects Supported

by the Assistance Mechanism since 2019

115

Projects supported
by the WestMED
Assistance Mechanism

45

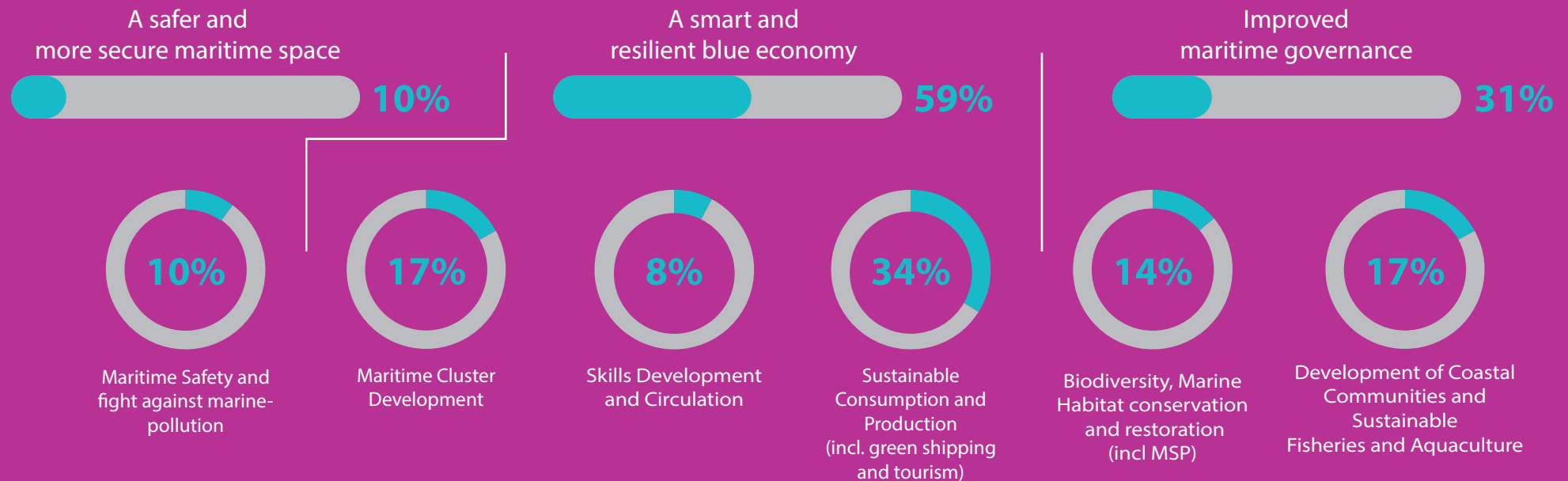
WestMED supported
project proposals
approved for funding



78.1 M

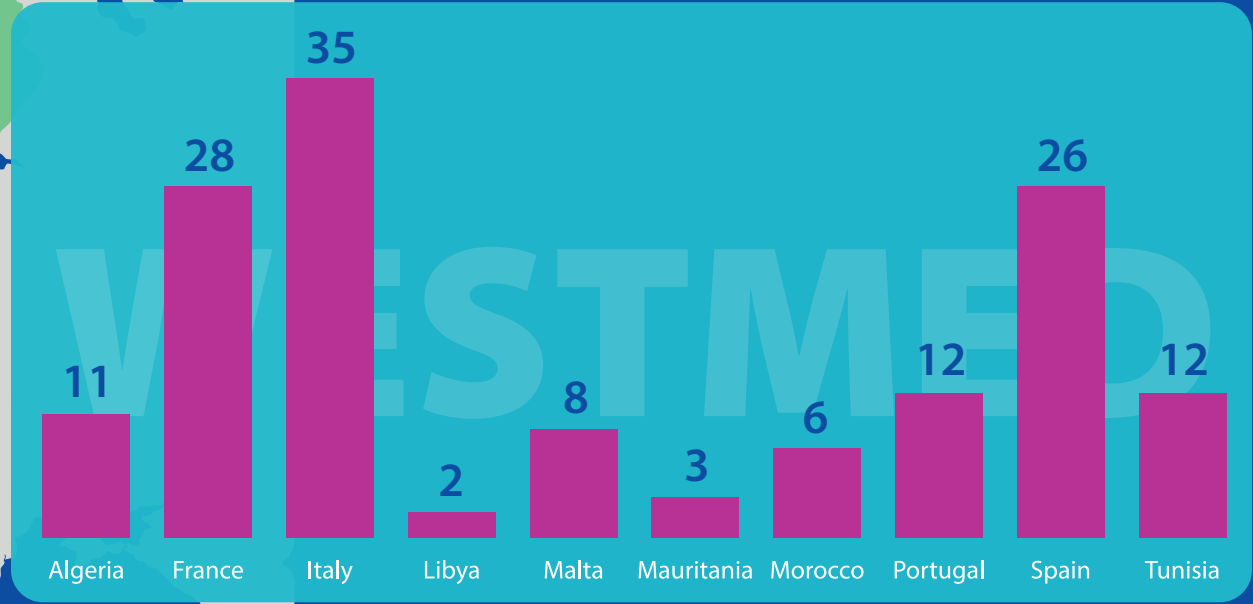
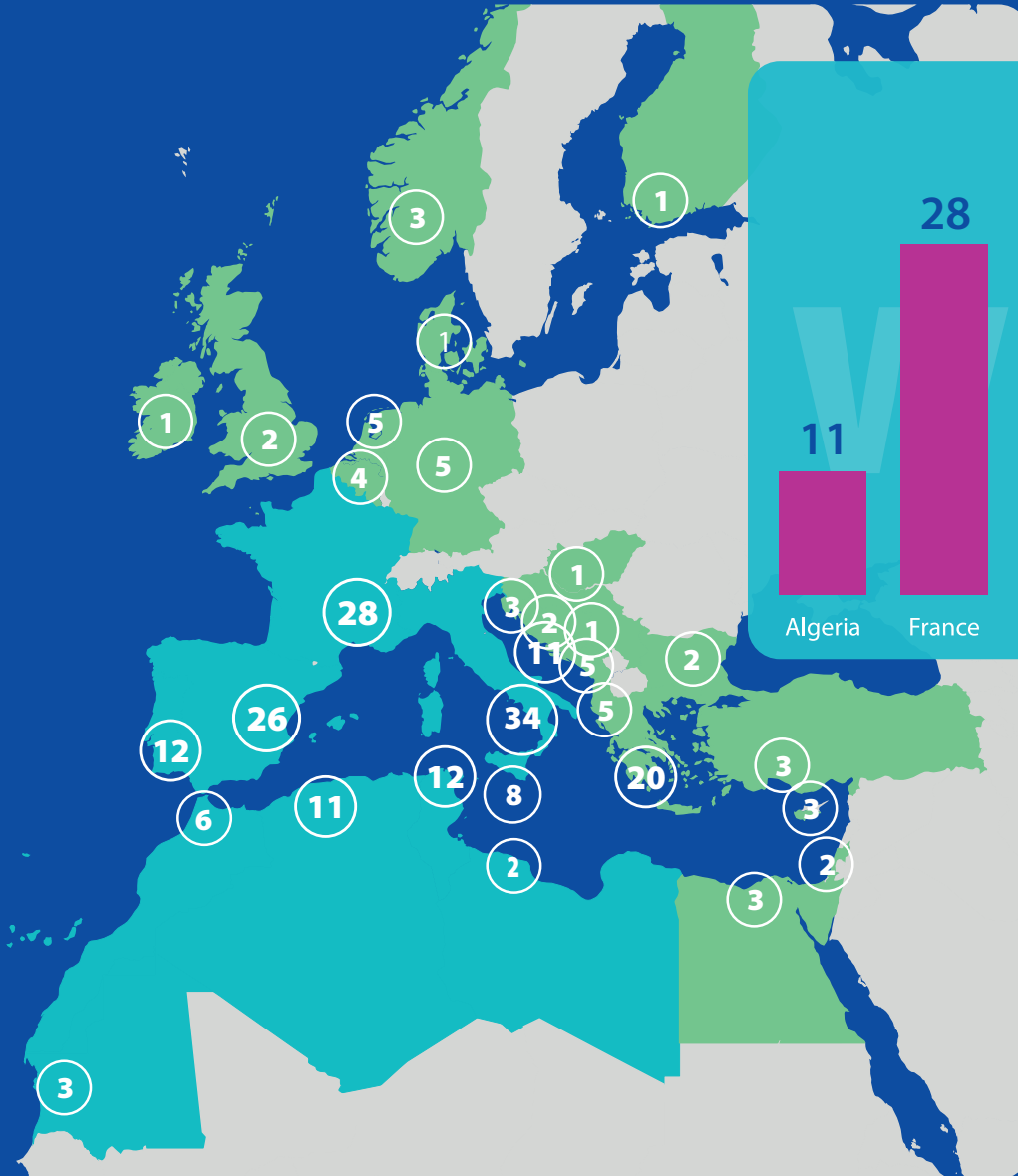
worth of investments
in the Sustainable Blue economy

Approved and funded projects/ Breakdown by WestMED Goals & Priorities



WestMED supported projects

that were awarded funding | involvement per country



21

Non-WestMED Countries

Mediterranean wide coverage (plus more)

21 non-WestMED countries participate(d) in the project consortia that were successfully supported by the WestMED Assistance Mechanism to access funding.

Greece (participating in 20 projects) and Croatia (participating in 11 projects) benefitted most. Followed by Montenegro, Albania, Germany and The Netherlands (each involved in 5 projects).

Some other results



Approx. **50** / year WestMED branded events – incl. Stakeholder conferences, Hackathons and Ministerials



Direct outreach to approx. **750+** stakeholders/ year (2023) - excluding online media coverage, 3rd party online events, several radio and television appearances



3 countries that have been directly supported with their national maritime -/ blue economy strategy (Algeria, Italy, Tunisia - with Libya ongoing)



1 National maritime cluster created with the support of WestMED in Mauritania, with others being developed in southern partner countries



2.750+ tweets/ posts related to news, (funding) calls, inspirational projects and events on the website and X (formerly Twitter)



11.4K views on YouTube **1.670** followers on X **24.300** website visits/ year (2023)

WestMED supported projects

that were awarded funding | overview

Project	Description	Topic	Countries	Funding Source	Total (€) Budget*
REBOOT MED	Recovering, Experiencing and Boosting eco-tourism in the WestMED area	Tourism	FR IT TU ES MA MR MT	EMFAF	1.249.225
Community-4Innovation (MEDISEC)	This project aims to strengthen innovative sustainable economy (ISE) in the Mediterranean region by developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities for the uptake of technologies in order to support the transition to a circular economy and consolidate a competitive innovation ecosystem with the 4-helix stakeholders.	Innovation	FR ES IT BA BE BG	INTERREG EUROMED	4.999.830
National project**	Construction of floating cages for aquaculture	Aquaculture	DZ	Programmes Nationaux de Recherche (PNR)	36.084
National project**	Construction of a ROV (Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicle)	Innovation	DZ	Programmes Nationaux de Recherche (PNR)	36.084
Study on mussels	Investigation of potential sources of contamination affecting the safety of mussels from Cultmare Shellfish Farm	Citizen health	DZ	Programmes Nationaux de Recherche (PNR)	36.084
DZAquaFarm	Multi-stakeholder platform for sustainable aquaculture in Algeria	Aquaculture	DZ	Programmes Nationaux de Recherche (PNR)	36.084
TOUMALI	TouMaLi stands for preventing Tourism Marine Litter. It aims to develop and establish sustainable solutions for waste management in the tourism sector in North Africa to protect marine ecosystems, leading to economic, but also fundamental health, environmental and social improvements.	Marine litter	MA TU EG DE	Germany Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	4.232.000
Green & Blue Route Plan	The Green & Blue Route Plan project responds to this program by offering support to companies in the maritime sector by helping them reduce their environmental impact. In particular, the project is aimed at micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the boat rental and/or charter sector, located in the territories of Liguria, Sardinia, Tuscany and the French Riviera.	Green shipping	IT FR	INTERREG ITA-FRA Maritime	584.000
MARMED	MARitime Cluster Manager Education Development. To promote competitive profiles for Marine and Maritime Clusters across Europe and, specifically in the Mediterranean Area, through the development and implementation of Cluster Management Educational Programs and training	Clusters	IT MT GR PT TN	Erasmus+	400.000
LEVIATAD	The LEVIATAD Project aims at creating the 1st Eurocluster of Excellence on Naval Defense	Defence	IT FR HR BE	COSME	1.391.000

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Sistina	Providing the business tourism system with a complete set of tools and to carry out innovative and highly integrated promotional actions that will make the most of the attractive resources of the cross-border area. The project aims at the integrated diversification and the innovative promotion of the tourist offer.	Tourism	FR IT	INTERREG ITALY- FRANCE	937.744
FSC**	Joint research activity.	Blue Biotechnology	FR IT	PON RICERCHE	45.000
LIFE4MEDECA	Reduction of emissions within the ECA MED area.	Green Shipping	IT ES DK IL DE FR NL	LIFE 2021	1.636.582
CO2NTROL	Collaborative platform for shipping container operations to take control of CO2 emissions by route optimisation.	Green shipping	FR	EMFF	3.730.000
MedBAN	The main MedBAN objective is to work as a one-stop-shop that will mobilize blue economy SMEs to adopt processes and technologies to reinforce their «twin transition transformation» into a more resilient, greener and digitalized economy in the Blue Economy (open strand), with the aim of reinforcing EU's strategic autonomy and resilience in several blue sectors (seafood, energy, transport, tourism, technology in general). MedBAN will also establish a network (beyond the Eurocluster) between Mediterranean clusters and other stakeholders that could contribute to a more sustainable Mediterranean (and EU) blue economy.	Clusters	FR ES IT PT, EL DZ TN	COSME	1.399.384
ELBE ALLIANCE	Cluster cooperation in Marine Renewable Energies	Clusters	FR ES	COSME	1.438.861
ARIBiotech	The objective of the project is to use waste found in the marine environment to produce new products using blue biotechnology (Alliance de Recherche et d'Innovation en Biotechnologie bleue pour la valorisation des déchets marins).	Blue biotechnology	IT TU	ENI-CT Italie-Tunisie	1.424.058
B-BLUE	Building the blue biotechnology community in the Mediterranean. Coordinated Capacity Building in Blue bioeconomy Subfields- Fish health-Food Safety and quality	Blue biotechnology	IT GR ES FR SL HR ME TU	Interreg MED	1.500.000
FIUUJFRA	Training for coastguard by EFCA. This was followed up by e-Fishmed; an EFCA managed project (included in the EMFAF Work Programme 2021), to set up a virtual academy on inspection and control for fisheries in the WestMed.	Coast guard training	MA MR DZ TN LY ES FR PT MT IT	EMFF	150.000
DigiCirc	European cluster-led accelerator for digitisation of the circular economy across key emerging sectors.	Circular economy	FR FI MT IT UK IT PT EL UK NL RS	Horizon 2020	3.754.678
GROOM II	The project will define the overall organization of an infrastructure (EU Center of excellence in robotics) dedicated to ocean research and innovation, and maritime services supporting Blue Growth.	Innovation	FR ES PT	H2020	3.075.000
BlueConnect2	Development of a cascade funding scheme for SMEs developing innovative solutions for ports.	Ports	FR ES	INTERREG ITALY- FRANCE	522.000
GALATEA	Development of new cross-sectoral and cross-border industrial value-chains, supporting in particular innovative SMEs and facilitated by clusters, to foster the development of Blue Growth key industries in Europe to be competitive at the global level.	SMEs & Clusters	FR ES	H2020	3.671.000

Project	Description	Topic	Countries	Funding Source	Total (€) Budget*
<u>NewTech-Aqua</u>	Expanding and diversifying European and Mediterranean aquaculture production of fin-fish, molluscs and micro-algae by developing and validating technologically-advanced, resilient and sustainable applications. A substantial involvement of the industry is essential for the project.	Aquaculture	IT ES GR NO HR UK FR BE CY	H2020	6.724.000
<u>Psamides</u>	Optimize ports operation and marina management by implementing innovative tools.	Ports	FR ES GR ME HR	INTERREG MED	2.859.330
<u>BLUEfasma</u>	BLUEfasma integrates and implements Circular Economy principles in two key blue growth sectors: fishing/aquaculture & coastal/maritime tourism to benefit MED insular, island and coastal areas in a novel, innovative manner.	Circular economy	MT GR CY HR MTN	INTERREG MED	2.812.000
<u>Blue RoSES</u>	Developing innovative services that seek to adapt marinas and leisure boat design to changing customer demand. By integrating robotics and IoT, these new services will result in creating job opportunities and new business models. Customers will be enabled to visit underwater sites by piloting a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) from a leisure boat, ground control room or web app.	Tourism	IT ES GR PT	EMFF	1.042.726
<u>DestiMED Plus</u>	DestiMED Plus aims to promote integrated planning on coastal tourism, where regional policymakers apply holistic policies that link tourism with conservation by putting in practice a concrete ICZM approach for ecotourism products in Med Protected Areas.	Tourism	IT ES FR HR GR AL TN MA US	INTERREG MED	3.076.000
<u>WIN-BIG</u>	WIN-BIG develops female- and basin-tailored capacity-building to increase the participation and representation of women across EU geographies and BE sectors and work towards a gender balanced Blue Economy.	Fisheries	IT IE NL BE NO DE ES	EMFAF	1.467.788
<u>2B-BLUE</u>	2B-BLUE aims to capitalize on B-Blue positive results to: 1) Exemplify evidence-based best practices identified to help communities turn BBt research into practice, 2)Build national demonstration sites (DS) to experiment emerging technologies or practices in local field conditions and bridge the gap among BBt research and industry for new technologies adaptation while help improve marine environment, 3) Establish strategic alliances of 5-helix stakeholders for the uptake of advanced blue biotechnologies by Med industries and 4)improve regional policies for enhancing sustainability, research and innovation capacities in Euro-Med area.	Blue biotechnology	FR ES IT GR SL	INTERREG EURO MED	2.411.643
<u>AZA4ICE</u>	The aim of the project is to promote the transition to a circular and efficient economy in the aquaculture sector.	Aquaculture	GR IT ES FR HR PT BG ME	INTERREG EURO MED	2.962.186
<u>BLUE ECO-SYSTEM</u>	BLUE ECOSYSTEM will test innovative methodologies focused on supporting territory-making processes through knowledge production in the blue sustainable economy, building on existing experiences achieved thanks to previous MED projects (MISTRAL, Blue Blo MED and B-BLUE).	Research and Innovation	IT FR GR PT HR ES AL CY	INTERREG EURO MED	2.978.115
<u>TREASURE</u>	TREASURE's overall objective is to improve environmental quality in and around Mediterranean port areas, by mitigating and reducing sediment and water pollution.	Marime transport (port connectivity & accessibility)	IT ME ES AL FR MT GR	INTERREG EURO MED	2.501.581

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Research programme on blue crabs**	The main objective of this research programme is to set up a coordinated science-based framework for the sustainable management of blue crab fisheries, taking into account both economic and environmental objectives.	Fisheries	DZ HR CY EG FR GR IT ME MA SL ES TN TR AL	GFCM	390.000
ECO-CRUISE-ING FU TOUR	The ECO-CRUISE_FUTOUR project aims to boost managerial, innovative, blue, green and digital skills of tourism WestMed SMEs in charge of the promotion of EU and West European coastal and maritime destinations through specialised capacity building programme, knowledge and tech transfer, preparing the transfer of good practices and multiplying the results. The goal is to exploit the green potential of WestMed tourism SMEs and cross-border cooperation to unlock new business opportunities around the new eco-cruise tourism sector. To this specific objective, the project will design Eco smart cruise packages targeting Millennials and Gen Z	Tourism	IT ES MT GR	EMFAF	990.222
e-FishMed	The e-FishMed project will set up a virtual regional academy to support the fight against IUU fishing and the control of conservation and management measures in the Mediterranean Sea, especially those adopted by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).	Illegal Fishing	IT ES MT PT DZ TN LY MA FR MR	EMFAF	1.000.000
CALL-MEBLUE*	Creating a structured cooperation model between maritime clusters on Northern and Southern shore of the Mediterranean, followed by a capacity building phase and an increasing strengthening of policy support and interregional cooperation. Dissemination and follow up would be important actions to guarantee sustainability of the project results in the long-term	Clusters	IT PT ES FR GR DZ TN	EMFAF	976.235
POWER4MED	local emPOWERment of fuel transition FOR a green MEDiterranean. Transition toward carbon neutrality in maritime transport requires short & medium-term solutions, the former based on transition fuels (LNG), the latter on not yet fully available alternative fuels (green hydrogen, methanol, electricity & wind). Dealing with such complexity is difficult for the operators of smaller ships and POWER4MED has the ambition to support them by developing the POWER4MED Supporting Structure, a “Supporting Team” of multidisciplinary experts and a set of toolkits facilitating the path toward carbon neutrality of the 3 sectors targeted by the project: fishing boats, commercial vessels and marinas.	Green Shipping	IT MT DZ ES EG TR LY	EMFAF	798.043
GreenMED	Observatory on technology for green shipping, Monitoring and Technology Foresight on Green Shipping in the Mediterranean	Green Shipping	IT ES MT GR	EMFAF	926.085
Green Marine Med	GREEN MARINE MED will bring together, engage and mobilise the comprehensive Mediterranean Green Shipping stakeholder community, representing the full value chain including actors from the full vessel community, ports and marinas, fuel and energy, as well as finance, investment, innovation and other stakeholders. The comprehensive Network will create the foundation to enable the most broadly supported and useful Monitoring and Technology Foresight on Mediterranean Green Shipping. Through the project’s unique inclusion of accelerators and other business support programmes in the Network, GREEN MARINE will strengthen the position of Green Shipping entrepreneurs and start-ups in the region.	Green Shipping	ES EG FR IT NL TN IL TR	EMFAF	1.165.587
Bamboo-Comp**	Application of innovative materials in sailing boats/ Development of sustainable bamboo fibre composites for water sports applications	Green shipping	IT DE NL	Eurostars 3	1.433,492
Bio-Based**	Developing and testing innovative IMTA plants in the Adriatic sea	Aquaculture	IT HR	INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA	1.260.000

Project	Description	Topic	Countries	Funding Source	Total (€) Budget*
FISHIM-PACT**	Promoting ESG principles and healthy nutritional habits to increase competitiveness, market diversification and effective communication for consumers in Adriatic-Ionian aquaculture and fishery sectors	Fisheries and aquaculture	IT HR AL GR ME BA	Interreg Adrion	1.748.000
<u>BLUE PORTS</u>	The BLUE-PORTS project will support the development of blue skills of ports' human capital and cover the gap between current services and targets of the European Green Deal, including the Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy until 2030 and 2050.	Ports and skills	GR IT ES DE	EMFAF	1.171.662
<u>Smart Twin Transition</u>	Smart Twin Transition will create innovative tools (based on AI and other digital technologies) to support companies in the tourism chain in their digital and green transition	Tourism	IT FR	INTERREG MARITIME IT- FR	1.140.922
Total					78.120.315

* Total Budget is the total amount of money for each project - which includes grants and other funding schemes

** No project information available online at the publication date of this brochure

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